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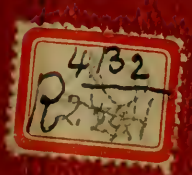

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

TWO DISCOURSES,

OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE

OF THE

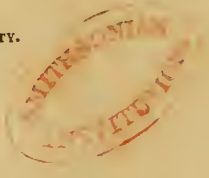
HON. DANIEL P. KING.

PREACHED AT DANVERS,

JULY 28, 1850,

BY F. P. APPLETON,

MINISTER OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY.



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FIRST DISCOURSE.

"I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.—JOHN XVIII, 4.

It is not possible to say more of any life than this. "It has accomplished the work God gave it to do." You can place before yourself no higher aim than this—to finish the work God trusts to your fidelity. And I have taken these words this morning, that we may ponder upon, and view more clearly, this high aim and bright Ideal of Life. If we can impress it upon ourselves, and by communion with its truth, rouse our aspirations and brace our energies for a nobler and stronger course; if thoughts of Christ or of any true friends—God's generous blessings to our hearts—shall move us to press forward more urgently on the Christian's immortal race, then this will indeed be a sacred, life-giving occasion.

God grant it may; for our work is vast, our power great, our influence wide, and our calling high. God grant it may; for though at every time earth needs the constant tribute of her children, there yet come hours when, above all, a voice from Heaven and earth tells us we must be faithful; shows us our work, entreats us to perform it. When we have, for a time, forgotten the deep earnestness of life; when we have become neglectful of real sincerity, and suffered custom to dim our purity and hide the light within; when the good, who have spoken many words of love and truth and freedom, when the honest, who have been strong in principle, when these pass from our sight and can only be heard and seen by the purified sense and earnest spirit, then above all, we need to brace our energies and lift our prayers for a truer life. And this is such an hour.

There is one truth, my friends, which you and I need to hold at all times; bearing it through every way of life, a talisman of strength,

a spell, by which in all temptation, victory is won. A truth which custom cannot change or time weaken; urgent amid the smallest, as well as the greatest duties. This truth—that we are God's servants, God's children, serving Him; God's beloved children, entrusted by Him with his eternal designs; immortal souls, consecrated by God to His service; apostles, sent forth by Him, even as the early christian disciples were by their Master and friend; ambassadors of the Highest, whose message is from above, to speak it everywhere, to show it in all places, to make it plain by our whole lives. That we are sent here, and have this wondrous life given, not for ourselves, but for others,—yea and for God. Through darkness, through light, through love, through hate, understood or misunderstood, still our work changes not, and our true life is the service of God.

We all believe this truth perhaps; but we want to believe it intensely. It ought to be the one great, foremost, awakening, ennobling truth for us. We accept it now, but we ought to seize and hold it, clasping it to our hearts, rooting it in our souls, as the source and end of Being. We do not reject it now, but we ought to prize and treasure it, as the watchword of true salvation, the key of Life and Immortality.

You know that the leading idea which a man has, makes his life. That which stands highest in his soul, the thing which most he he worships, rules his life and shapes his actions as it will. Our actions and words are the interpreters of the life which we most earnestly cherish within. It is the man within, that stamps his impress on the man without, as seal upon the wax. Whatever reigns within, reigns without also. Your hands and tongue must worship what your soul worships. If you worship God within, you worship Him too in your words, you worship Him in your actions. It is the same God. You cannot have two. The God of your thought and the God of your action, must be the same; good or bad; whether the God of heaven or an earthly God, He rules you.

Your life then, depends upon the thought you enthrone within your souls. Make that high, and your life cannot be low. Now we know we are God's children, sent here to work for him. We see this to be the great practical truth of life. But unless it reigns within we cannot feel its power. Where it stays day after day, dethroned in our souls, we cannot see its worth and dignity. We revere it less

and less, and it were better for us that we had never seen it or heard it, or known it in any way. It is not want of spiritual truth which keeps us down below the saints and angels, and below our true life, but it is the want of deep and constant reverence for this spiritual truth. This is the great evil of our lives. The best we know, is not the highest we worship. This is the cause of shame and woe and weakness. We have light enough to make our earthly path bright and glorious, like the way of heaven. The uplifted eye and revering soul is what we need; and this we must, with God's aid, make for ourselves.

Take then this truth you have, that you are God's child, sent here to do his work and fulfil his will, take it and lead it up among the crowd of thoughts and motives in your soul, up where it should be, to the highest place; and then bow down before and worship and serve it there. So your life will be the service of God, the fulfilment of your Father's will.

And more that word of Jesus speaks to us, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." We are led by it to another thought. The *finishing* of God's work, the *accomplishment* of his purpose. This is only an end and sure consequence of the reign of this truth we have already considered. Have you not noticed that in every good life, there is a certain completeness, a harmony, a balance and unity? Look at it from what point you will, it is the same complete life. You have not necessarily to stand here or there, to see that it is complete. You may look at it from any place. You may view it as a whole, or in its parts; judge it by a single action, or by the deeds of a long course of years, it is the same. Break it off suddenly, stop it in mid course of usefulness by the grave. It is to that point, a true, complete life. Remove the grave—which never yet stood in the way of any truly good life—and lo, it has joined the heavenly existence; there is no discord, no jar. It mingles with that higher state of being, as the river of life might flow into the ocean of life. It is complete. It satisfies. Stand at the point of passing; stand where that clear river of love and truth and thought, which long has cheered the scenes of earth, enters the heavenly country, to flow deeper and wider and stronger amid its immortal gardens and celestial mountains; stand where it enters there, and whether you look back upon the past course of that life river, or

foward upon what the prophecy within tells us of its course to come, you see no painful contrast. The past course was all tending to the future, and the future, seems but the past, glorified by growth and power. So test it where you will, a good life is complete. And why? How is it? We certainly do not feel *our* lives are always complete. Stop them at this moment and see. There are deeds of kindness we have omitted in the past. There are duties we have half performed. We treated them carelessly, and unless we can go back and complete these duties, our true work cannot be considered finished. In short, up to this moment, we have not done *all* of God's work. We have the part, but not the whole; and so any sudden check upon our lives shows them very incomplete. How is it then, on looking at the truly good life, we see such perfect, or at least so great a degree of completeness? Simply for this reason, friends. Those good lives are complete, because their parts are complete. They are made up of years of duty, and these of months, and these of days, and these of hours, and these of minutes, of duty well performed—completed duty. They are made up of greater and lesser duties, and these, each and all, are thoroughly done. So when these all are bound together, making as they do a life, the whole is complete—the life is complete.

And how have beings like ourselves been able to live such lives; accomplishing the least as well as the greatest duties well? How have there been such harmony, unity and consistency, in all portions of their varied life? Now we are led back to the truth with which I began, the regal truth of life. These true souls devoted themselves to the fulfilment of God's will. They felt He had given them something to accomplish in life. They held all duty shown them, to be sacred; and treated it as divine.

This, my friends, I think is the truth which arouses and sustains in its course, every life that thoroughly does God's work. Such, surely was the thought which reigned in the soul of Jesus, enabling him, as he looked back upon his life to say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do."

And in this sense only, can we say a life is finished. In the sense that, so far as the days and hours of that life went, the duty God had placed in them was accomplished. In this sense, but in no other. No life ends. No earthly life ends. Take away its days

and hours; there yet remains one thing you have not taken; one thing you never can destroy. The *influence* of that life. In this, it still lives on earth. Yes, there you have touched its Immortality. Death comes no more to that, than it does to the serene life of Heaven. At the very hour Jesus said his "work was finished," his work for man was scarce begun—nay, it is but begun now. Even his life on earth was not finished; for is it not that life, that Savior life lived in Judea, that life of completeness upon which he was looking back, when he said his work was done, is it not now moving and swaying and regenerating by its undying example the lives of millions; slowly, yet in the end to conquer? His course finished, and his work done! Why its earliest morning is but now breaking upon us. No! when you speak of the good, speak of them as living here now, though they entered Heaven a thousand years of earthly time agone. When you speak of the true, speak of them as bearing their witness to-day, for freedom, Christ and God, whether they died in the earliest age of earth, or passed onward, but yesterday.

Such thoughts as these, my friends, have come this last week, as I have remembered the life, and seen the death, of one who has been a true friend to me and to many of you; known to you all, through a series of years of public life. A faithful friend, an honorable man, and one who strove to be a Christian.

Since I have been with you, many good and pure, whose friendship is dear to me, have entered upon the higher life; and I have not spoken particularly of them in this place, because there is a certain sanctity about the private life of the good. We would not break in upon that, even when they are in Heaven. We will speak of them where their lives were most seen and felt,—in their homes, and our homes. But with this friend, the case is different. They whom we call from their homes, and place in public stations, are kept before us constantly. There is little privacy in their lives. We scrutinise their actions and their motives; and when excited by party spirit, talk harshly about them. It is but simple justice, when they pass to the higher life, and we know them to have been good and honorable, that we publicly should speak, and render willing testimony to their lives. For this reason above all, I mention here our friend, of whom, in one sense we can say, his work is finished. Restraining the strong

language which love and gratitude urge me to use, I speak of him and his life, calmly, as the truth bids.

I have said he finished his work. Suddenly as he died, when a score of years for future usefulness seemed prophecied by his calm energy, and health unbroken by any excess—suddenly as he laid his armor by, his work was done. More truly of him, than of most, it can be said "he accomplished the work his Father gave him to do." Because as I well know, he looked to that Father for guidance, and heeded his word. Because he trusted God, more than man, and tried to serve man, by serving his God. His work was accomplished; because whenever it came, in whatever form, his aim was, to do it faithfully. The slight duty was respected, even as the greatest. That which but one would ever hear of, nay, no one but God, promptly as though a million eyes were watching. He helped the poor widow, earnestly and willingly as he did the well known and powerful—and it is such unknown virtue as this, the angels of Heaven smile down upon.

He filled many offices of private and public life. Few men ever filled them all so faithfully. I think he did his best in all. I think he was faithful to his light. Proofs of this have come to me from so many and such diverse sources, that I have been surprised and deeply touched. The tribute has been the same, from the little child, to the trembling form of age; from the inmost heart of home and friendship, to the not easily touched nature of official station at Washington. Without my seeking, they have come to me. I speak only what these all have spoken.

He did not change his profession with his place. The politician's curse rested lightly upon him—nay, he cast it off. He worshipped his God, and loved his Savior, and was kind to the unfortunate, alike where these virtues were, and were not popular. He was the faithful father and husband and friend, from year to year, whether with, or away from home and friend. He did not slight the inexperienced, though he had been taught by experience. Mature himself in years, one at least I know, had good reason to feel that he sympathised with and encouraged youth.

Amid the wild turmoil of passion and corruption in our nation's councils, he kept his nobleness of purpose. His quiet word weighed much there, because a *man* spoke it.

But I say no more now. Further consideration of our friend's life I reserve till we meet here again. I am giving no eulogy. His life is his best eulogy. I have used words which to my feelings seem weak and icy, in order that I might keep, as I have kept, far within the bounds of truth.

There is a lesson in such a life; a word from Heaven for you and me. There is aid, counsel and encouragement, by taking which to ourselves, we shall be the better able to finish the work our Father has given us to do.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

"I have glorified thee on the earth—I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."—John, xviii. 4.

I endeavored this morning, to trace out the meaning of these words, and the truth they convey for our daily practice. I referred, too, to that friend of ours and of his country, who, this last week, passed on to serve his God in another stage of being.

There are other thoughts appropriate to the occasion. Thoughts of our duty to man and God, and of fit respect to him who, by most of us, has been known so long.

We have noticed the meaning of Jesus when he spoke of the work God had given him to do, and found that we too, have our work from God; indeed that our life is given for us to do that work. That he sends us forth as apostles, teachers, and ambassadors of his eternal purposes. And that, when this truth reigns in the soul, as the one great predominant truth, the imperial influence within us—then, and then alone, we accomplish the designs of God.

When every duty is thus done as a sacred duty, then at whatever point our life may be viewed, and whenever arrested, it is complete; up to that time our work is finished.

Well said Jesus, when, looking upon his life, he saw it to have been thus lived—"I have glorified Thee, O Father, on the earth." What other way is there for us, or Christ, to glorify God? If you do not do this by your life, you do not do it at all. If you do not the work God gives you, you cannot glorify him; and whenever you do perform your duty you do glorify God. The smallest duty as well as the greatest, *done*, is glory given by man to his maker. All beside, is worthless and profane. Test your lives then, by this; and until your duty is performed, never believe that you worship God. Everything which is right is God's design; what He shows you to be right, is the portion of His design you are to accomplish. There

is a right, even as there is a God, and your part is to defend and uphold that right. You and I are not here to do what is expedient, or to please men. We are to serve God, and so help men. Every benefactor of his race, has been a benefactor, only so far as he has done this.

It is mournful to see so little of this spirit in our nation,—to look forth, and find our shops, and homes, and churches, and houses of legislation, such strangers to this faith. Popular favor sought in our places of business, appearances worshipped in our homes, mean caution in our churches, and compromise in our National Legislature. Policy before principle; man before God; expediency before Truth; caution before Faith.—These are our mottoes, written out by our actions for Heaven and Earth to see.

I claim no peculiar virtue for myself. I say *we* do this, and I think it cannot be denied. We want a different spirit, or our life work never will be done. We want a higher aim, or we never shall be strong; and God will give his work to more faithful souls.

In the morning I made private application of this truth; now I give it public appliance. Yet, one just as religious, for true religion is the true service of God, and He is to be served everywhere.

It is mournful, I say, to see so little of the spirit of devotion to right, and therefore God's design, abroad in the homes, places of worship, business, and legislation of our country. Look at Washington, where for many months the question of slavery or freedom, for millions yet unborn, has been the great and only question. What has been the course there?

Do not, now, say this is a political matter, not be intruded upon the Sabbath or the pulpit. I call the liberty of millions, the question of their freedom to worship God, to have their souls enlightened and their hearts and homes unpolluted, a religious matter; a matter entering into the very essence of Christianity. What idea of Jesus and Christianity can you have, to suppose the life and purity of millions nothing in their sight! Say you, Christianity counsels peace, and by speaking of this wrong, in Churches and on Sabbaths, you break their peace? Ah, there comes up expediency again, that serpent of our day; doing the same work the serpent of old did, though in a different way. That serpent offered man the knowledge of good and evil, while this serpent does the worst work of all;—he

takes away the knowledge of good and evil; and they who listen, see evil and call it good, and hearing good, think it evil. This question not a religious one! Think you our friend, whose place here 'tis hard to think will know him no more, he who, so shortly before his work was finished, bore witness in all Christian manliness, against compromise with slavery—think you that, from the Heavenly life, he looks not back with serene joy upon the witness he then bore? That, which our hearts tell us may well enter the thoughts of angels, is surely worthy to be spoken of here.

I say then, again, look at Washington, where for so many months the great qnestion of slavery or freedom for millions, has been the only question, and see what has been passing there. What have our greatest minds,—at least we call them so—our wisest legislators, such we term them, the men who, for a quarter of a century or more, have led in our nation's councils—what have they been doing? And what have a large proportion of our people—people too, who so far as they live in the north, at the last election canvass, were such dear friends of the slave, and abhorers of slavery; who fairly made the anti-slavery reformers' store of pointed terms and strong words,—trite, tame and commonplace, so often did they use them;—what have these very people been for months upholding these great minds and wise legislators in doing? Why, in arranging, ornamenting and gilding a compromise, so that it shall not look altogether too wicked to be accepted in our homes and churches.

The question has been, how shall we compromise; not, what is Right. How shall we settle the matter; not how *ought* it to be settled. What will the South bear, or what will the North bear; and not, what does God bid us do. The South is not God. The North is not God. The Constitution is not God. The Union is not God. What are these men, their upholders, and we, sent into the world for, but first of all, to serve God? If they and we do this, we shall surely serve all that is right, in South and North; in the Constitution and the Union. But serving God, we cannot serve anything that is wrong in South or North, or Constitution or Union. Here 's the trouble. And so we forsake God, as impracticable, and worship compromise, which in such cases, seems a useful, but is a terrible master.

The question would have been settled long ago, had every man there served his God and truth, as he has less worthy masters. God makes the way of his servants very plain. He relieves them from all necessity of watching public opinion, courting votes, fearing man, inventing compromises, breaking principles, or insulting truth. The way of right is straight. They who follow it move fast. Policy and compromise are very crooked. Our Congress have been six months travelling, and have made little progress. Oh for men who know there is a God and serve him truly, to rise up now and speak the word of truth. Oh for men worthy of the name, who worship and do not fear the Right. We need them to lead us. We cannot let them go when once we have them.

Not long since, amid all this corruption, one man rose and spoke thus:—"In my judgment, this question of the spread of Slavery is not a question of expediency, but of right; not a matter of fancy, or of choice, but of stern duty; not a shadowy abstraction, but a thing of body and soul and spirit. In our deference to superior wisdom and respect for long experience, we must not forget our own responsibility. Our own conscience though it be but a taper light, to us steady and constant must be the lamp that guides our feet. The distrust of our own powers, will be no excuse for the neglect of our duties. We cannot disobey the promptings of our own deliberate judgment, and the convictions of our own understandings. In matters of principle and conscience, as no one can share with me the responsibility and suffer for me the penalties of a crime, I can and will permit no one to direct my course. * * * I think I know one man, who neither from dread of abuse, nor fear of opprobrium, will smother his sentiments or sacrafice his independence.

Louisiana, Florida and Texas, have been acquired, and are devoted to slavery. California, New Mexico, and Utah are yet unshackled; they must be sacred to freedom. They stretch out their hands to us, and beg that we will not bind the unwilling victims, nor drag them up to the altar of unholy sacrifice. In the whole of that country, whether it be broken up into rugged and inaccessible mountains, or spread in desert sands, or vital in green fields and fertile valleys, as far as my influence and my vote can go, that soil shall be free; and the men and the women, whatever complexion an African or an Indian sun may have burned upon them, shall tread that soil free, erect and unshackled."

Hear these words friends. They are words which he, though dead, yet speaks to us. They are worthy words wherewith to have closed his course. They are words needed to be heard again and again in that House, where he labored so diligently for what to him was right.

I know that he tried to serve his God there. I know that he endeavored to be faithful to the cause of truth and freedom. Therefore there, where the wise and prudent are stumbling, and the sagacious are at fault, and intellect and statesmanship blindly dig pitfalls for themselves and others, this man could stand by himself in the right place, and speak the right word. Simply because his aim was to serve God. Oh! there is no light like that God gives his faithful children. Sincere men differ in their judgment;—they may be forced to regard as wrong and oppose each other; but in the end, in matters of undoubted principle, they work together for the good result.

Do you not know, my friends, that it is hard for us always to serve God by doing our whole duty faithfully? Do you and I not know that even in our homes, with duty plain before us, and no voice to bewilder or threaten or disturb, we often are conquered where we ought to be victorious? What must it be then, to be true in such an atmosphere of evil as rests upon our Capitol.

"You cannot know," said one to me who has had some hard conflicts with temptation there, "what strength, decision, and invincible courage are needed to keep one true. You are attacked on every side by hidden and open foes; plausible reasons and earnest words are used to make you yield, and before you know it, by one single word perhaps, you are compromised and led away." Then though a strong opponent, with deep respect and affection, he spoke of our friend whose labors there are over now. And that this friend was true when so many failed, we ought to thank God, and pay deep respect and gratitude to his memory.

My friends, as I said this morning, so I repeat now—I am giving here no eulogy. Let his life do that. Not because he was a kind friend to me, do I speak. I should say what I have, had he been my enemy. Not because he has risen to Heaven. The dead, as we call them, need our praises less, much less, than the living. Not because of his friends. There are other places than this, in which

to recount with them his good deeds. Not because he was one honored with office; but because I hold him to have been a true man, by whose faithfulness, the office which he held was honored. He gave worth to that; not that to him. Because by such a life, and by every true life, God teaches us; because we for our own sakes need to gaze upon and follow the footsteps of those who tread the upward way of honor.

We have long had him with us. Sunday after Sunday, unless absent at his post of duty, we have met him here, where together we seek light from Heaven. To some of us he has been well known in our homes; to some, a near and dear friend for many years. And now, unless strengthened by his influence, we devote ourselves more truly than ever before to Right and Freedom, we and our nation have met with a great, an irreparable loss. At this time too, when the great crisis comes, and one true or one false word may turn the scale for liberty or slavery through years, the absence of the true man weighs heavily. But if we now take upon ourselves the added duty, if we are ready to carry on the work which he finished to the day he left it, the loss which has been his gain, will be our gain also; and we be nobler, and truth and liberty increase. Though the good man pass away, the life of earth shall still be better, if only, they who remain, accomplish their Father's work.

Man cannot fill again the place our friend has filled in his home and in the hearts of his friends; only God and spiritual communion can do this. But there is a place which another must take. That post where freedom is to be defended and our Nation's honor upheld. By whom it shall be taken, rests with you among others; and if ever the voice of gratitude and of God summoned men to put aside all lower motives, of party, of prejudice, and of selfishness, and be guided in their choice by real zeal for freedom and desire to serve God, that voice speaks now to you. *In the name of God and Christ and the crowd of heavenly witnesses around, I charge you be true to this duty. Be true, though you stand alone;* and verify these words, the last our friend spoke of us in the councils of the nation. "In my home," he says, "we have been taught to feel and believe that slavery must not be extended; the sentiment cannot be checked, hardly controlled; it rolls down our mountain sides, it flows over our plains, it pervades our cities—but brings no madness nor desolation in its

path; our men are resolute men, they will maintain their rights. They are honest men, they will yield to others their rights."

The changes are great and startling that have come of late in the high places of our nation. The sudden removal of our Chief Magistrate, in whose integrity many believed and hoped. The sudden calling away of this our friend, whose strength was broken by his constant labor and arduous service for the truth; by pain for the loss of principle around him; by disappointment from those to whom he looked for good counsel and honorable courtesy, and by the death of him, whom through personal knowledge he respected and esteemed. We hear it said again and again, that such deaths are lessons to us. Say rather it is the life, and not the death of a friend, which is the great legacy to us. It is this must teach us and make us stronger.

Again then, I say, my friends, if in this our friend, companion, and fellow-worshipper's life, you see aught true and pure and worthy, cherish it well. Take it to yourselves. Make him live again in your lives. Join him still in worship each Sunday, by worshipping God sincerely. Souls below and those above but one communion make, when in prayer and life they unite themselves in the service of their God.

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OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE

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